

At parties, people soon tired of her. When others talked about weather, she replied that she liked pretty horses. Sometimes she stared at the floor and said absolutely nothing at all. She stumbled about, clumsy on her feet, sometimes walking straight into trees. The only thing she knew for sure was that she was the stupidest in the land. She cried on her walks in the forest, the birds often outsmarting her and stealing her lunch. When she met Ricky with the Tuft, she said she couldn't marry him. Like most naive people, the princess didn't filter what might be rude. You are too ugly, she finally said. The prince convinced her that if she loved him enough, he would turn handsome right before her eyes. He said, in return, he had the capacity to make her wise. Suddenly she was talking about Ricky's favorite geometry theorem. An unexpected wind arranged the prince's tuft into a flattering style. The rest of the town's people could see no difference. But Ricky claimed the princess's vacant gaze was deep with meaning. The princess saw Ricky's red-eyed squint as evidence of his passion. They lived fairly happily, fooling themselves, believing indeed that they both finally had what they wanted.

— Denise Duhamel

Williamsport PA

## TYING TIN CANS TO TAILS

the distinguished mid-century american poet  
anthony hecht once wrote a parody of  
matthew arnold's poem "dover beach"  
and entitled it "the dover bitch."

hecht's poem has been widely anthologized;  
"dover beach" is arguably the best known poem  
in the english language; and norman holland,  
in his dynamics of literary response, provides  
convincing psychoanalytical explanations  
for the popularity of each.

i have studied and taught several  
other poems of both arnold and hecht,  
but i can't claim to have internalized  
very deeply any of these others,  
whereas i used to be able to recite



"dover beach" by heart, having memorized it during a very boring class in college and having thrilled to it, in silent melodrama, during other equally boring sessions.

hecht and holland spoiled that for me somewhat.

still, "dover beach" will live on, and, if hecht and holland do also, they will owe a considerable debt to matthew arnold.

i sort of hope that i will not be known to posterity for this here "tremulous cadence" alone, but, in the eternity department,

i'll settle for what i can get.

#### TUESDAY'S HERO

"my god," she says, "you did the dishes."

"i didn't do them very well," i say.

"of course you didn't. you never do. but still, you actually did them ... and just when i had an awful day at work! whatever got into you?"

i say, "i just thought i'd surprise you."

i don't mention that i'd run out of envelopes in the midst of mailing manuscripts,

and that i figured i'd perform my grand gesture before the dishes had a chance to really pile up.

#### WATCHING THEM UNWIND THE DOUBLE HELIX

charles and i are discussing how feminist extremists seem to want to remove all forms of power, strength, authority, wealth, virility, fertility, athleticism, experience, creativity, prowess, accomplishment, prestige, brains, wisdom, and,

of course, paternity,

from the list of qualities a woman should be allowed to find attractive in a man,